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DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES ON SAUDI ARABIA'S DEVELOPMENT*

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INTRODUCTION

Until recently, development was widely regarded as a largely economic phenomenon. As a result, the main quantitative indicator of a country's development status was its gross domestic product. While this index does measure one of the key aspects of development, the accumulation of wealth and productive power, it is clearly inadequate as an indicator of the country's social and institutional characteristics and level of progress. In particular, pure economic measures of development are often quite weakly connected to some of the demographic determinants of fertility and mortality, themselves presumed to be a function as well as determinant of economic growth (Adelman and Morris 1965). Nowhere is the discrepancy between per capita income and the normal patterns of demographic change more obvious than in Saudi Arabia.

Since the publicly available demographic statistics for Saudi Arabia are incomplete, it is not possible to construct a totally accurate picture of the country's population dynamics. What data that is available does indicate some patterns, however, and can be made to serve most of the purposes of this study. The methodology used here is to hypothesize on the basis of general knowledge, demographic movements likely to be taking place in the Kingdom.

POPULATION SIZE

The actual size of Saudi Arabia's population has been a subject of controversy for some years. A summary report, released by the government in 1976, estimates the country's population at 7,012,642. Table 1 shows some figures given by different sources.

While there is some doubt as to the size of Saudi Arabia's population, there is little question that the total is growing very rapidly. This expansion is taking place through stepped up immigration and a relatively high natural growth of indigenous Saudis. However, the good statistics on the country's

* Original English

TABLE 1 SAUDI ARABIA: POPULATION ESTIMATES (MILLIONS)

	IMF ILO	UN	U.S. Census
1960	5.98		
1961	6.12		
1962	6.26		
1963	6.42		
1964	6.58		
1965	6.75		
1966	6.93		
1967	7.12		
1968	7.33	5.89	
1969	7.53	6.07	
1970	7.74	6.25	
1971	7,97	6.43	
1972	8.21	6.62	
1973	8.45	6.81	
1974	8.71	7.01	
1975	8.97	7.21	6.2
1976	9.24	7.43	
1977	9.52		

Sources: International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Financial Statistics, 1979, pp. 358-359; International Labor Organization (ILO), Labor Force 1960-2000, Estimated Projections, Geneva 1977, p. 45; UN, Economic Commission for Western Asia, Population Division, Estimates and Projections of Population, Vital Rates, and Economic Activity for Members of the Economic Commission for Western Asia, June 1978, p. 68; U.S. Census, United States Bureau of Census, Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C.

population size, structure, and on the number of births and deaths, leaves the magnitude of a number of important demographic trends in doubt. On the other hand, there is substantial evidence that several of the Arab countries in the region with fairly good demographic data are likely to have similar demographic patterns. In depth analysis of the demographic dynamics of these countries, particularly Jordan and Kuwait, has identified a number of commom elements bearing on several key parameters (Royal Commission 1977). Using what Saudi data is available, and making comparisons with these neighbouring countries, one can, based on expected levels of birth and death rates, indirectly infer the natural growth of the Kingdom's population.

GENERAL ARAB DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS

The Arab countries as a group have certain economic and demographic characteristics (Choucri 1980) that distinguish them from other countries in other geographic areas. Saudi Arabia and most of the other oil exporting countries are in large part still in the early stages of development and demographic transition, i.e. large families are the norm rather than the exception. In addition, even though experiencing severe labour shortages, they maintain a number of customs on female participation in all parts of society. In general, the less affluent Arab countries, while capital deficient, have at least until very recently had abundant labour. These countries are also less reserved concerning female participation in the labour force. Several countries in this group, Egypt in particular, have introduced family planning programmes. In contrast, Saudi Arabia has strictly forbidden the introduction of any contraceptive measures into the Kingdom to check the increase in population. The two groups of countries complement each other in several ways. In particular, a considerable flow of capital and human resources takes place within the region proving highly beneficial to both groups (Birks and Sinclair 1979).

With several notable exceptions, Saudi Arabia's demographic patterns show a marked similarity to those experienced in the region as a whole. The average rate of population growth, in both Saudi Arabia and the Arab region, is around 3 per cent a year, and, in both instances, fertility rates are high. The demographic structure of these countries is characterized by the youthfulness of the population; in most of the Arab countries, the proportion aged 15 years or under accounts for over 48 per cent of the population. The rate of the economically active population is low, ranging from 22 per cent to 32 per cent of the total population, with the female participation rate varying from 3.5 per cent to 18.5 per cent. In the non-agricultural

sector, the average activity rate of women (over the age of 15) usually does not exceed 6 per cent (ECWA 1977).

Arab countries are also characterized by their high infant mortality rates. In 1975, these ranged from 60 to 200 per thousand (ECWA 1977). Illiteracy rates for the group, as a whole, are also high and they are significantly higher among women than among men. The illiteracy rate for the Arab countries, as a whole, averaged (1975) around 47 per cent for males over 15 years old; it exceeded 70 per cent for females in this age group. In nearly all of these countries, there has been increasing concern over the amount and quality of education received by women. The result has been that special attention is currently being directed toward girls' education (Abu-laban 1976). This is clearly reflected in the increased proportion of girls (ages 6-24) enrolled at various educational levels. For the Arab countries as a whole, this proportion rose from around 14.3 per cent in 1960 to around 25 per cent in 1975. In spite of the progress, female illiteracy rates in Arab countries are still among the highest in the world.

When it comes to participating in the work force, Arab women tend to be concentrated in agriculture. In Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, and the two Yemens, for example, rural female activity rates for women are about twice as high as in the urban areas. Female employment in these countries is apparently acceptable as long as it is confined to family farms . When families move to the city, however, females seem forced, for one reason or another, out of the labour force (Azzam 1979).

Educational levels, customs, traditions and social obligations, among other socio-economic factors, all have been used to explain the rather unique pattern of labour participation rates exhibited by Arab women. Many countries in the region declare their rigid commitment to the teaching of Islam as a code of teachings and as a way of life and behaviour; yet one can easily conclude that Moslem women's deprivation from assuming a more active particpation in various activities in public life, in political, intellectual, social and economic areas, is rather based on rigid understanding, in some countries, of the teachings of Islam. This approach is not principally founded on the preachings of the Koran; that Holy Book does not approve the imposition of a negative role on women; it rather calls for making educational opportunities available for women as much as they are open to men.

Arab families have emphasized early marriage for girls. In addition, the high value of children in Arab culture has contributed to fertility levels that are very high by international

standards and has restricted women to household activities and child raising.

GENERAL DETERMINANTS OF FERTILITY

Most of the recent empirical work on fertility patterns, in both developing and developed regions of the world, rests on the assumption that couples act rationally to maximize their welfare (Yotopoulus and Nugent 1976). At the household level, this concept relates to pertinent household decision making where families are confronted with many interrelated options such as adjustments in fertility, whether the wife can work or not, and whether the children can have many or a few years of formal education.

At the national level, the assumption relates to a situation that can be accepted as the broader and more comprehensive standard representation of the household. The theory is, therefore, extended to relate to socio-economic and demographic conditions through a system of simultaneous relationships (Schultz 1972).

Whether rationality and economic calculations of this sort permeate the typical Arab household is a matter of great controversy. Because of scepticism over the applicability of rational behaviour models to the Arab household, very little empirical research was, until quite recently, carried out to analyze and test these socio-economic determinants of fertility and female labour force participation. Despite stepped up empirical work, many of the cause-effect relationships in this area between fertility and female labour force participation are still unknown. Recent findings (Tabbarah 1978), have however, begun to fill significant gaps in our knowledge about the Arab family and female behaviour.

ARAB FERTILITY PATTERNS

Fertility studies for specific countries in the region have all found a strong correlation between the fertility rate and level of education. These results confirm an important finding documented in other developing areas that fertility declines as the level of education of women rises. While the overall education-fertility pattern is now well established, it appears that a certain level of educational attainment is necessary before a noticeable drop in fertility rates can occur.

In summarizing research carried out on Arab fertility (Tabbarah 1978) most studies found the major variables correlated with fertility to be as follows:-

1. Levels of infant mortality: fertility tends to vary directly with this figure;

2. The degree of urbanization: this is almost always inversely related to levels of fertility;

3. Level of education or literacy and female labour force participation: for most countries, these are negatively related to levels of fertility;

4. The level of per capita income or standard of living and fertility: here, the relationship tends to vary from country to country;

5. Social status of females.

It should be noted that most of these variables, while significant for individual Arab countries, have not been shown to be correlated with fertility for the region as a whole. The relationship with per capita income illustrates the problem of generalizing about demographic patterns in the area. Apparently, increasing per capita income causes many Arab families to emphasize a better quality of living and increased education for their children. Thus, the tendency is to opt for fewer children who will be sure of receiving the material requisites of life. On the other hand, however, an increasing level of family income seems to generate a tendency for Arab families to consume more of everything in general and to have more children. These two effects may, or may not, offset each other when considered simultaneously.

SAUDI FERTILITY PATTERNS

What we know about Saudi fertility patterns comes largely from a multipurpose survey conducted by the Saudi Arabian Central Department of Statistics during 1976 and 1977. From that survey (Rashid and Casady 1977) a live birth rate of 54.2 per 1,000 was calculated for the Saudi population. This is somewhat above the U.N. figure of 49.5 for the country and over the average for Arab countries of 46.6 for 1975 (Table 2).

According to the multipurpose survey, live birth rates for Saudis vary considerably from town to village. Live births were 41 per 1,000 in the six largest municipalities, 54 per 1,000 in the smaller municipalities, and an extremely

TABLE 2 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES BEARING ON FERTILITY: SAUDI ARABIA AND ARAB COUNTRIES, 1970

Variable	Saudi Arabia	Arab countries
Crude birth rate	49.50	46.60
Infant mortality rate	152.00	121.00
Labour force participation rate - women aged 15-44	6.83	9.94
Secondary school enrolment rate	9.00	22.03
Per capita income	495.00	762.44
Percentage adult male and female population that is illiterate	81.32	66.52
Percentage adult female population that is illiterate	98.00	82.12
Education attainment of female	10.00	25.00
Percentage of labour force in agriculture	40.40	43.80

Source: Compiled from Azzam 1979.

high 61 per 1,000 in villages and other rural areas.

Several factors have been cited for these patterns:

1. Many Saudi men live and work in urban areas where wages are high, while their families remain in rural areas where housing is more readily available and less expensive.

2. Women who have accompanied their husbands to urban areas often return to the parental home for the birth of a child.

3. Traditionally, family size is larger in rural areas of the Kingdom.

These seem plausible enough and, given the rather limited education of Saudi women, their exclusion from the work force and the government's ban on the importation of contraceptives, it is fairly safe to argue that no major reduction is likely to occur, at least through the 1980s.

Finally, one of the questions asked on the survey was how many children each married Saudi woman had borne in her lifetime. Thirty-two per cent of the women, fifteen years and over, had at least seven children in their lifetime. Only 12 per cent had never had a child. Many of these childless women (37 per cent) were under twenty. The survey also indicated that the average size of a completed family was 7.2. The women child ratio was 8 to 1, again one of the highest in the world.

MORTALITY GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The decline in mortality is an integral component of the process of socio-economic development and modernization. In part, its role in modernization is definitional and results from its pre-eminent position as a social indicator; no country would qualify as modern in the standard sense of the term if it failed to significantly reduce its death rate from its historical levels.

A number of important relationships tend to exist between mortality and other growth-inducing variables. For example, a decline in death rates contributes to the return to many forms of investment that are necessary to achieve high levels of economic production. Most obvious among these are investments in one's personal economic future such as schooling and training. Presumably, the longer the period over which one expects the benefits to accrue, the greater the expected value of such

investments as improvements in other factors of production such as irrigation or land reclamation (Yotopoulous and Nugent 1976).

From the purely macro-economic point of view, it seems clear that the major consequence of mortality change is in its effects on population growth rates. There is now abundant evidence that mortality decline should not be expected to induce an equally large reduction in fertility, usually for at least several generations. Therefore, population growth tends to accelerate for an extended period following declines in mortality.

The effects of accelerated population growth on economic progress is controversial. On the one hand, a main line of argument suggests that more population retards the growth of output per worker. The overwhelmingly important element in the Malthusian theory is that of diminishing returns to labour, as well as the theory that the stock of capital, including land, does not increase in the same proportion as does labour.

Another important theoretical element is the dependency effect, which suggests that saving is more difficult for households when there are more children and that higher fertility causes social investment funds, to be diverted away from high productivity uses. Combined in simulation models, these elements suggest that relatively high fertility and positive population growth have a negative effect on output per worker. These models (Pitchford 1974) assume a closed system where resources are fixed, diminishing returns occur, savings rates fall and stagnation sets in. As such, the models have no applicability to Saudi Arabia, where outside resources in the form of oil revenues are continually augmenting domestic resources.

On the other hand, there is some evidence that population growth may actually stimulate development. Conlisk and Huddle, (1969), for example, regressed the output growth rate on the savings rate and the rate of population growth over roughly 1950-1963 across the 25 less developed countries that received aid, an external source of funds. The coefficient of the population growth was 0.692 and was statistically significant, suggesting that an increment of population has, *ceteris paribus*, a positive effect on *per capita* income.

Less controversial is the link between economic growth and mortality decline. Prior to the era when the knowledge of cheap and effective public health intervention was developed, there is evidence to suggest that improvements in general living standards were the dominant source of mortality decline. Since that time, many new factors have come to the fore. Although economic factors remain very important in differentiating among nations

mortality levels, pure economic growth now appears to be an inefficient method of reducing mortality (Simon 1976).

Diverting a dollar of income towards improved literacy appears to offer a far greater change for mortality reduction than allowing that money to either consumption or investment. Nations that have structured development in such a way as to increase levels of literacy and to spread public health and nutritional programmes widely among the population have achieved remarkable advances in lengthening life (Preston 1978).

MORTALITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

This pattern observed in numerous less developed countries seems to hold for the Middle East. During the last few years, Bahrain, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Yemen were among the fastest growing economies in Western Asia. Mortality decline in these countries, however, has been modest to some extent.

It is likely that mortality will significantly decline in the Kingdom if past income gains are translated into social and health programmes. If, in fact, the direct effect of this type of expenditure on mortality is much greater per dollar than that of income growth, and given the massive expenditure during the Second and Third Five Year Plan periods, there should be a fairly swift reduction of mortality in the Kingdom during the 1980s.

MORTALITY IN SAUDI ARABIA

In this regard there is plenty of room for improvement. According to the afore-mentioned multipurpose survey, the mortality rate for the Saudi Population is 14.1 per 1,000. This rate is very close to the average of 14 countries in Western South Asia (1974), but nearly double the Kuwaiti rate of 7.2 per 1,000. As with the birth rate, the crude death rate is related to the degree of urbanization, increasing from 6 per 1,000 in the Kingdom's six largest municipalities, to 16 per 1,000 in the smaller municipalities, and finally to 18 per 1,000 in the country's villages and other rural areas.

Some of the more important factors that may contribute to this urban/rural differential are the availability of hospitals, clinics and other types of health care facilities. Higher education levels and the higher proportion of the younger age groups in the urban areas undoubtedly reinforce this pattern.

SAUDI ARABIAN POPULATION GROWTH

If we accept the birth and death rates indicated by the multipurpose survey, then it is safe to conclude the Kingdom's population is growing at a national rate of three per cent, or more, per year.

The youthfulness (table 3) of the population and the large numbers of women that will be entering the fertile age group, ages 15 to 44, over the next decade, means that the process of demographic transition and the attainment of a stable population will require several generations. Even if fertility begins to decline, the country can be expected to maintain a high rate of natural population growth well into the next century (table 4).

IMMIGRATION

Superimposed on the high natural rates of population increase is extensive immigration into the Kingdom (Shaw 1979). Migrants are drawn in because wage rates in their own countries are significantly below those offered in Saudi Arabia. Their duration of stay is limited, being almost always less than three years. The typical expatriate worker is young (20 to 40 years), single, works exclusively on a job he was hired for prior to arrival, transfers a large amount of his earnings to his home country, and does not plan to establish permanent residence in the Kingdom.

In 1975, there were approximately 773,000 foreign workers in the Kingdom. While no official figures exist as to the increase in immigrants since that time, several unofficial estimates place the 1980 foreign work force in the Kingdom at around 2 million.

The post 1973 oil boom was by no means the beginning of Saudi Arabia's increasing dependence on foreign manpower. Ever since a modern state structure began to emerge under King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud in the 1930s and 1940s, skilled advisors and technicians have been brought in from the outside to run large areas of administration and industry.

Until 1975, the majority of the immigrants have been coming from the Arab world. Since this date, the picture has begun to change: more and more unskilled workers are being imported from Asia.

Since nearly all construction workers in the Kingdom are foreigners, an appreciation of the magnitude of this inflow can be obtained from the various estimates made of the manpower requirements implied for this sector, if it were to meet the

TABLE 3 SAUDI ARABIA: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX; 1975 and 1980

Age Group	1975				1980			
	Male	Female	Total	Sex Ratio	Male	Female	Total	Sex Ratio
Under 5	15.9	17.1	16.5	101	16.4	17.5	16.9	102
5-9	13.8	15.0	14.4	101	13.1	14.0	13.5	102
10-14	12.8	13.2	12.9	106	11.8	12.4	12.1	104
15-19	11.2	10.9	11.1	113	11.2	11.4	11.3	108
20-24	9.7	8.4	9.1	127	10.5	9.5	10.0	121
25-29	7.3	5.9	6.6	135	9.0	7.3	8.2	136
30-34	5.5	5.2	5.3	116	6.0	4.9	5.5	134
35-39	4.8	5.0	4.9	106	4.5	4.3	4.4	114
40-44	4.4	4.6	4.5	104	3.8	4.1	3.9	102
45-49	3.7	3.8	3.8	106	3.5	3.8	3.7	105
50-54	3.1	3.1	3.1	112	3.0	3.2	3.1	104
55-59	3.1	3.2	3.2	107	2.4	2.5	2.4	105
60+	4.6	4.6	4.6	110	4.8	4.8	5.1	104
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	110	100.0	100.0	100.0	110

Source: Ministry of Planning, Quantitative Economic Unit. "Estimated Population-Manpower Statistics", Riyadh, 1975.

TABLE 4 ILO FORECAST OF SAUDI ARABIAN POPULATION BY AGE GROUP: 1975-2000, BY THOUSANDS

Age group	Male					Female				
	1975	1980	1985	1990	2000	1975	1980	1985	1990	2000
0-9	1,494	1,753	2,024	2,307	2,788	1,449	1,698	1,960	2,232	2,695
10-14	542	641	768	898	1,185	525	622	745	871	1,149
15-19	461	533	631	759	1,031	444	516	613	736	1,001
20-24	393	450	521	620	876	379	434	506	603	853
25-44	1,050	1,203	1,385	1,602	2,225	1,016	1,167	1,344	1,558	2,176
45-54	297	341	394	455	615	294	339	391	454	613
55-64	184	213	247	287	392	193	222	258	300	410
65 and over	115	135	160	191	273	131	156	185	221	319
Total	4,534	5,269	6,130	7,119	9,385	4,431	5,154	6,002	6,976	9,215

Source: International Labour Office: Labour Force: 1950-2000, Volume I: Asia (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1977).

targets set for it by the country's Second Five Year Development Plan (1975-1980).

When the required number of indirect labourers are added, over 2 million construction workers are estimated for 1980. This implies that, to meet plan targets, an increase of 1.8 million foreign workers from the (1974) base of 220,000 would have to take place over the five year period. If productivity increases continue, the full capacity of the construction labour force is forecast to peak around 1986 to a total of 2.25 million foreign workers. From the mid-1980s on, the foreign work force is expected to slowly decline, as increases in productivity accompany changes in technology and a general tapering off of construction.

Projections of the construction labour force usually start with the assumption of 400,000 workers directly related to the construction industry, in 1975. Projections made in 1975 using the conservative set of assumptions (table 5) about increases in labour productivity forecast 1,832,000 direct construction labourers in the Kingdom around 1980, assuming the construction industry is operating at the capacity required to meet the goals of the Second Development Plan.

To understand the implications of these forecasts, it should be noted that even if only half the construction capacity is used, there would still be over 800,000 non-Yemeni, non-Saudi construction labourers in the Kingdom around 1980. On the other hand, if only half of the 1974 labour base, largely Yemenis, are replaced by foreigners, there will still be over 900,000 non-Yemeni, non-Saudi foreign construction labourers, supervisors and support personnel in the Kingdom by 1980.

Nor is this the full extent of the problem. Construction workers, especially supervisors and managers, often bring their households with them. For the sake of estimation, if we assume from past experience that all of the supervisors of the administration personnel and 20 per cent of the direct workers, brought their households with them, and each of these households added 1.5 more persons, then an additional 76,000 foreigners would be in the country in 1976. By 1980, that figure would increase to 217,000. Given these assumptions as to the number of dependents together with those concerning the size of the full capacity plan work force, there would be approximately 798,000 construction workers and their families in the Kingdom in 1976, increasing to 2,287,000 by 1980.

In addition, the spin-off effects of these construction jobs must be taken into account for a complete estimate of the likely foreign work force. Based on international experience,

:e		SCET							
Man years	Square meters thousands	Productivity square meter/ man year		Man year thousands		Square meters	Productivity square meter/ man year		Man year thousands
		Low	High	Low	High		Low	High	Low
399	8,776	43.88	45.88	200.00	200	5,586.00	27.93	27.93	200
639	12,988	47.95	49.35	270.84	263.18	9,048.76	37.50	37.61	241
850	19,220	52.40	55.51	366.77	346.32	14,658.09	50.36	50.64	291
1,208	28,444	57.26	62.43	496.68	455.72	23,747.64	67.62	68.19	351
1,670	42,095	62.58	70.21	672.61	599.68	38,463.84	90.81	91.81	424
1,832	62,303	68.39	78.96	911.00	789.00	62,301.00	121.92	123.62	511
1,925									561
1,999									616
1,976									676
1,980									742
1,994									814
1,992									893
1,952									980
1,885									1076
1,802									1181
1,723									1295

Construction Industry in Saudi Arabia, Riyadh

an extremely conservative estimate would be one job created for every five construction workers. A more liberal, but still plausible assumption, is that one job is created for every two construction workers.

Using the conservative figure, but excluding the family dependents discussed above, the Ministry of Planning has estimated that 144,000 jobs in 1976, were generated by employment in the construction sector.

The more liberal assumptions, concerning construction induced employment, imply that there would be 1,083,000 construction and construction related-jobs in 1976. Projecting the conservative figure to 1980 indicates by that date 2,484.000 persons, would be working on, or serving, the construction population .

It should be noted that construction accounts for over 52 per cent of all development plan expenditures. If the total economy reflects this distribution of construction/non-construction expenditures and if the capitalization ratio of the average non-construction sector job is equal to or less than the construction sector, there could be as many non-construction foreign labourers as there are construction sector foreign labourers.

Saudis are more likely to be a part of the labour force of the non-construction sector, so not as many foreigners are likely to come to serve all other economic sectors as presently serve in the construction sector, but the percentage would be high in any case.

At any rate, the actual inflow of foreign workers probably occurred on a scale unprecedented in modern history.

CHANGING COMPOSITION OF THE WORK FORCE

In 1975, the vast majority of foreign workers in Saudi Arabia were from the regional Arab countries. Most of these were employed as unskilled labourers with, by far, the largest group coming from North Yemen. The latter are still the only group permitted to obtain residence permits untied to specific labour contracts, making them the only legal floating reservoir of workers in the Kingdom.

Increasingly, however, the Saudis have been adopting the practice of controlled labour contracts whereby foreign workers are brought into the Kingdom for stipulated periods of time on specific jobs under block visas. As a result, the Yemenis are on specific jobs under block visas and, consequently the Yemenis are increasing as a percentage of the foreign work force (Halliday 1977).

Indeed, the proportion of Arab immigrant labour to the Kingdom is going steadily down. Several authorities feel the share of Arab foreign labour in Saudi Arabia has dropped to below 50 per cent by 1985. One of the reasons given for this pattern is that the rapid increase in the rate of development after 1973 found the traditional Arab exporting countries increasingly unable to send more workers abroad. Jordan, for instance, has nearly one-third of its labour force outside the country. Thus, the Saudis were obliged to link increasingly elsewhere. Shortages of available Arab labour forced the Saudis to tap other labour pools.

The substitution of Asians for Yemenis has been the major change in geographic composition since 1975, with the proportion of immigrant labourers brought in from the far East and the Indian subcontinent growing from less than 5 per cent in 1975 to around 30 per cent by 1980. The growth in Korean workers from 4,000 in 1975 to around 40,000 in 1980 was especially dramatic (Sidahmed 1981).

Despite the attractiveness of foreign workers, the government began steps in 1978 to control the flow of migrant workers into the country. Previously, official documents required for work in Saudi Arabia were easy to obtain and often never asked for by the Saudi authorities. This was particularly true for groups like the Yemenis who, at one time, travelled to Saudi Arabia without passports or visas. By imposing the responsibilities of correct documentation on employees the government gained a degree of control over its migrant work force unknown previously (Shierreff 1979).

THIRD PLAN TARGETS

Apparently, the Saudis have come to feel that their dependence on foreign workers is no longer desirable. The projected increase in the size of the civilian labour force, over the Third Plan period (1980-1985), has been 155,000 (Ministry of Planning 1980). This represents an annual growth rate of 1.2 per cent and corresponds to the difference between the new civilian employment opportunities, 310,000, and the estimated number of people leaving agriculture, 70,000 and construction, 85,000.

Officially, the Saudi Arabian government has stated that development in the Kingdom has reached the point whereby most jobs can be effectively manned with Saudi workers. To compensate for the foreign workers and still attain the Third Plan targets, the level of productivity must increase by 27.2 per cent by the end of the Third Plan period. This is an average

annual rate of around 5 per cent.

Finally, the population of Saudi Arabia, like the population of most of the Arab oil exporting countries along the Arabian Gulf, has grown very rapidly since oil exporting began. This increase stems both from international immigration and rapid rates of natural increase for both the indigenous and the immigrant populations.

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